

Charles Rowland
Rowland Farm, LLC
72 Towner Lane
Oxford, CT 06478

March 13, 2014

Dear Legislators,

I am a Connecticut farmer. I raised and marketed hogs in Oxford as part of a diversified farm operation that also has included beef production, poultry, and hay. We scaled our hog operation back in December, 2013. I was a direct marketer of Berkshire hogs, selling to local farmer's markets, restaurants and meat markets. My family operation marketed more than 200 pigs annually. My family has been farming in Connecticut for more than 100 years and I have been actively involved with pork production for 30 years including being involved with the Connecticut Pork Producers Association before it dissolved.

As a farmer and former pork producer, I am offended the state legislature would consider a bill outlawing a humane farming practice. The option to house pregnant pigs in the safety of gestation stalls can be of great welfare benefit to both the pig and the farmer. A vote in support of this bill is a vote against Connecticut family farmers. If passed, you are taking away my right to farm and telling Connecticut family farmers we are incapable of making good decisions about what is best for our animals and our farms.

When I raised pigs, I checked on them multiple times a day, ensured they had the best care and nutrition possible, and I worked to make sure they were comfortable. The state did not have to tell me to do this; I did it because it was the right thing to do for the pigs. This bill takes animal care out of the hands of the farmer and yields to the whim of animal rights activists.

Proponents of this bill utilize emotional arguments in an attempt to overlook sound science and reasoning behind using gestation stalls. The use of gestation stalls is approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians; Veterinarians who work with the animals and have researched the issue at length and determined that gestation stalls are a suitable way to care for pigs.

When raising pigs, my farm did not utilize gestation stalls. However, I fully understand – and support the reasons behind – why other farmers use stalls. Pregnant pigs are large, hormonal creatures that can become aggressive and dominant. Gestation stalls are a tool to protect the farmers working with the pigs (who can weigh more than twice that of a human adult) as well as the pigs from other aggressive pigs. Outlawing this tool takes away trust in Connecticut's family farmers and eliminates a humane method for a farmer to better care for their animals and themselves.

Please vote against Section 2 of Bill No. 5416.

Sincerely,



Charlie Rowland